

Dr. John Gerber was born September 8, 1796 in Schangnau, Bern, Switzerland, a



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son of John and Susannah Indermuehle Gerber.

He first married Magdeline Haug and she and her baby died in childbirth May 22, 1826 and were buried in Bahama Island near West Africa. He next married Maria Elizabeth Wagner on October 17, 1827, and she also died in childbirth December 15, 1828. In Sierra-Leone, West Africa, he married Johanna Elenora Sessing on January 8, 1830. She and a baby Fredrick died September 12, 1842. His last wife was Anna Maria Ackert, whom he married in St. Louis in 1843. She was born May 11, 1824 near Lake Zurich, Switzerland.

Dr. Gerber died in Midway, November 22, 1870. Anna Maria Gerber died February 11, 1912 at Maeser, Uintah County, at the home of a daughter.

Dr. John Gerber was a pioneer of 1854. His parents were well educated and of the so-called Swiss upper class.

He received an excellent education in his youth, and early in life developed a love for the spiritual, and prepared for the ministry. He attended the University of Bern, and at the age of twenty-three was admitted to the local Lutheran Missionary School at Basel. For three years he engaged in theological training preparatory for the ministry; also busied himself in the study of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin receiving special recognition for his mastery of the same. He was accomplished in French, English, and his native tongue—German. He studied medicine and surgery in France which was required of all who aspired to the missionary labor.

On the 13th of January 1822, at the Collegiate Church at Stuttgart, he received from his most distinguished prelate Dr. Flatt the ordination of the Protestant Lutheran Church and thereafter entered the services of the English Bishopric Missionary Society of London. From London he was sent as a

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minister of the Word of God to the Negro colonies in Sierra Leone, West Africa, where he labored with devotion and success in Bathurst and other Negro branches of the coast. A party of twenty-one, including three women, formed the company, only three of whom survived the tropical climate and lived to return to England, the rest dying in that unhealthy place.

He was a lover of the great outdoors and enjoyed the adventure of exploring new areas. He often went on hunting trips, usually taking Negro attendants along. These expeditions at times took him far out in the tropical forests and occasionally he was in great danger.

Carrying out his ministerial calling for ten years, serving also as doctor and school teacher, he was forced to leave his post in West Africa because of a severe illness of yellow fever from which he nearly lost his life. Recovering sufficiently he returned to London, and then to Europe where he visited with relatives and friends, and for a time continued his missionary labors in Bern, Switzerland.

At Basel he received the following: "We recommend our dear friend most highly as a servant of the Gospel, worthy of brotherly attention to the praiseworthy, Protestant Lutheran consistories of the honorable Presbyterians of the German Lutheran Protestant churches and branches in the United States and we send with him on his future path of life our brother God-speed and we dedicate him to the merciful guidance of the great Master of His Church who has promised to be with His own to the end of the world."

Written at Basel, Switzerland, 29 May 1834

Dr. Blumhardt

Inspector of the Lutheran Missionary Society."

From England he sailed to America, arriving in the autumn of 1834. He located at Basel, Ohio, and resumed his labors as traveling missionary and preacher for the Lutherans, covering several states in his missionary services including Alabama, Tennessee on the south, and Indiana, Missouri and Ohio to the northwest. He continued his labors and medical services for upwards of eighteen years in America. However, while still employed he heard of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the restored Gospel. Learning that a Mormon Elder was to preach at

Madison, Indiana, he went to hear him, and being favorably impressed made a thorough examination of the doctrines and principles of Mormonism and shortly thereafter he accepted the divinity of Joseph Smith's claims, and was baptized August 8, 1852, by John Jones at St. Louis, Missouri. His wife and father were baptized the same day. In accepting the restored Gospel, they were driven from the society in which they had so happily lived and were treated as outcasts. Dr. John lost his position as a minister and the pay for preaching, as well as his clientele as a practicing physician. He also could not collect outstanding bills. To add to their distress their fine home was burned including all their earthly possessions. In this trying and sad situation their faith in the true Gospel was put to a severe test. Yet they had obeyed the divine message and received a testimony that they had surely taken the right course and remained true to the faith.

Dr. Gerber was married four times (single marriages). His first two wives dying in Africa, and the third wife in America. He married Anna Maria Ackert in St. Louis about 1843. In the spring of 1854 they made preparations to emigrate to Utah. At this time the family consisted of grandfather John, father Dr. John, mother, and five children: Julia and Ellen daughters of Anna Maria, Mary, daughter of the second wife, and John and Louis, sons of the third wife. Grandfather John was eighty-five years of age and in failing health. The journey across the plains and through the mountains was very trying owing to his poor health. His great desire, often expressed, was to live to see the Salt Lake Valley. This was granted to him for as soon as the company came in sight of the valley, he asked to be helped from his bed to which he had been confined so long, "so I can see the Land of Zion." After taking in the sights for which he had longed for the privilege of beholding, he remarked: "I am satisfied and ready to go." Arriving on Emigration Square that night, he quietly 'crossed the bar.' The date was October 6, 1854.

After his father's burial, Dr. Gerber with his family was called to go South with a company going to the Utah Dixie. His son, Moroni, was born at Cedar City, October 4, 1856, and Matilda at Washington County October 11, 1858. In 1859 they came to Provo City where Dr. Gerber practiced

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medicine, and did whatever additional work he could to provide a living for his family. In 1861 they moved to Provo Valley, locating at the Upper Settlement. They were among the original settlers of the area. Here they established their first permanent home in Utah filing on an eighty-acre tract of land. The father with the help of his son, Louis, built a log room near a spring of good water, and together with the help of the older children proceeded to cultivate his acreage raising wheat, potatoes, and other garden vegetables. He also practiced medicine, receiving produce in exchange for his services. Their two youngest children were born at Mound City: Sarah Elisabeth June 2, 1861, and Emily Adelia (Watkins) October 12, 1864.

In June 1867, Dr. Gerber leased his property at Mound City, and moved his family to Salt Lake City, where he devoted his entire time to the practice of medicine, and succeeded very well. In Salt Lake City he was a member of the School of the Prophets. In September, 1870 the Gerbers returned to Mound City. Late in October Dr. Gerber was taken seriously ill and steadily grew worse, until he died November 22, 1870. A few weeks before his death he called his family to his bedside and gave each one counsel, and reproof where he felt it was needed, and then gave his father's blessing to his children in turn as to age, and included all grandchildren who were present.

"Before his death, he gave one of the strongest testimonies of the truth of the Latter-day work, that man can express with words, which point he wished me (John Huber) to be particular not to omit. The above the Doctor told me before he died and desired me to report to the News. Few men have departed this life more peaceably than he did." (Deseret News, December 1, 1870)

Dr. Gerber was buried in the Upper Settlement cemetery on the foothills northwest of Midway. A pioneer memorial has been erected in Midway as a tribute to Dr. Gerber and all those buried in the old cemetery.

After her husband's death, Anna Maria struggled with poor health, but after about 1873 was able to take on work as a midwife to support the family. She became very proficient in her work and was called to many parts of the valley to assist in births or in any form of sickness. She was even called upon to care for sick animals.

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One wintry night a knock came on the door, and she opened it to find a nervous, expectant father. "Come quick, Mother Gerber, my wife is having a baby," he exclaimed. Then he was so excited that he jumped on his buckboard and drove off into the night, leaving Anna Maria to walk three miles through the snow.

She took an active part in Relief Society, and served as nurse and midwife for more than 25 years, usually receiving only produce as compensation.

During the latter years of her life she lived at the homes of some of her children. She lacked three months of being 88 at the time of her death.

Dr. Gerber and his second wife had one living child, Mrs. Owen (Maria Sussana Wilhemia) Cole.

The children of Dr. Gerber and his third wife include:

John, Louis and Fredrick.

The children of Dr. John and Anna Maria Gerber were:

Julia Carolina died as a child
Mrs. Ira (Julia Jemeyma) Jacob
Mrs. Joseph (Hellena Elenora) Jacob
Anna Poulana died as a child
Benjamin Ulrich died as a child
Moroni married Emily Jane Jacob
Mrs. Isaac (Mary Matilda) Jacob
Sarah Elisabeth died as a child
Mrs. Arthur (Emily Adelia) Watkins.

JOHN T. GERBER

John Theophilus Gerber, pioneer of 1854, born April 7, 1837, Basel, Green County, Ohio, son of Dr. John and Johanna Eleonora Sessing Gerber. He was baptized a member of the Latter-day Saints Church in April 1854, and came to Utah with his father and other members of the family, arriving in Great Salt Lake Valley October 6, 1854. After a short stay the Gerber family traveled to the southern part of the state, while young John T. remained in the city, and went to work for President Brigham Young.

Six years later he received a call to serve as a missionary in Switzerland, his father's native land. He left in the early autumn of 1860, and after nearly four years service was released. During his return trip home he married Anna Mary Rupp, August 28, 1864, and he with his bride came to Utah in Captain Wm. Hyde's ox train, arriving in the Valley October 26, 1864.

